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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
MONDAY, JUNE 20, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
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HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

Rice Voices Support for Palestinians - Milliyet 6/19
Chirac: EU Budget Crisis Won't Affect Turkey - Sabah 6/19
European Press: Turkey in EU 'Deep Freeze' - Hurriyet 6/18
Israel to Demolish Settlers' Houses in Gaza - Aksam
Iranian Reformists to Vote for Rafsanjani - Aksam 6/19
'Orange' Demonstration in Baku - Aksam 6/19

OPINION MAKERS

Ambassador Edelman Leaves Ankara for US - Radikal
Rice on Middle East Tour - Yeni Safak
Wolfowitz Tours the 'Black Continent' - Radikal 6/19
Lebanese Opposition Declares Election Victory - Zaman
Israel Apologies to US for Arms Sales to China - Cumhuriyet
Bloody Day in Iraq: 26 Dead - Radikal
US Forces Kill 50 Insurgents on Syrian Border - Cumhuriyet
6/19
The Independent: US Used Napalm-Like Bombs in Iraq - Radikal
6/19
Chirac-Blair Fight Over EU Budget - Radikal
Serbia's Tadic to Apologize for Srebrenica Killings - Yeni
Safak 6/19
Vietnam's Khai Visits US - Cumhuriyet

BRIEFING

Ambassador Edelman Leaves Turkey: Ambassador Eric Edelman left his post in Ankara and departed for the United States over the weekend, Monday papers report. The new Deputy Chief of Mission, Nancy McEldowney, will serve as the acting ambassador until the new ambassador arrives in Ankara some time this fall, US Ankara Embassy sources told the press. Papers expect that the former US Ambassador in Baku, Ross Wilson, will be assigned to Ankara. Before leaving Turkey, Ambassador Edelman noted at the US National Day reception in Istanbul on Friday that Turkey and the United States have supported each other in the fight against terrorism. Edelman stressed that his country had always supported Turkey's modernization, adding that the two countries would maintain their cooperation.

Ambassador Edelman Interview With "Milliyet": The following is a summary of the second part of an interview with Ambassador Edelman carried Saturday in "Milliyet":

'The Turkish military is an extremely professional and capable institution. The ties between our two militaries and defense institutions have traditionally been an important element in Turkey-US relations. The Suleymaniye incident caused a crack in this relationship. During my term in Ankara, I have worked to put the military relationship back on track. If the US Congress approves my nomination to the Pentagon, I will work to see that the High Level Defense Group meetings are held annually. The Deputy Chief of the TGS, General Basbug, and his US counterpart General Pace held a very productive meeting last week, and I believe we have made enormous progress. The Land Forces Commander, General Buyukanit, and our land forces commander in Europe, General Wald, have been working to establish such contacts at lower levels as well.'

'The Turkish press has written repeatedly about the enemies of Turkey at the Pentagon. If there are enemies of Turkey at the Pentagon, I've certainly never met one. Paul Wolfowitz and Doug Feith, who both recently left the Pentagon, have worked for the benefit of US-Turkey relations. It would not be fair to say that Wolfowitz held the Turkish military solely responsible for the parliamentary rejection of the deployment of US troops in Iraq through Turkish territory on March 1, 2003. He just voiced some disappointment over the lack of a strong statement from the military leadership on the importance of

the March 1 decree. It would be wrong to say that Wolfowitz put all the blame on Turkish military. During my term here, I haven't known anyone at the Pentagon who has been a stronger supporter of Turkey than Wolfowitz.'

'We need more time and talks to repair the damage the Suleymaniye incident has inflicted on our military-to-military ties. The incident provoked a lot of disappointment and anger in Turkey. I don't know how long will it take, but I hope that we will manage to overcome that damage. We need time to heal all of the scar tissue left by that incident.'

'I prefer looking to the future, not the past. Instead of debating what happened on March 1 or July 4, 2003, let's try to build a stronger and better relationship. From that standpoint, I am leaving Turkey in a much more optimistic mood.'

Turkey Makes Goodwill Gesture Regarding Afghanistan: Monday's "Sabah" claims that during his meeting with President Bush at the White House earlier this month, Prime Minister Erdogan said the majority of Turkish troops in Afghanistan would remain there to help in civil reconstruction projects even after Turkey hands over the ISAF command. Erdogan also suggested forming regional reconstruction teams in high-risk zones outside of Kabul, and sending engineers and doctors to Afghanistan. President Bush welcomed the 'surprise' Turkish proposal as an effort to restore the strategic partnership between the two countries, "Sabah" speculates. The paper reports that a senior US official said that President Bush 'thanked the Prime Minister for his proposal, and asked the US National Security Council to look into what could be done.'

US 'Flirts' With Turkish Opposition Parties: The United States has started searching for alternates to Turkey's ruling AK Party, and has invited the leaders of the opposition True Path Party (DYP) and Democratic Left Party (DSP) to visit Washington on November 10, Monday's "Aksam" asserts. Turkish opposition parties have been pressing for early polls in an effort to block the election of Prime Minister Erdogan as Turkey's next president.

Erdogan Losing Trust of West: European diplomats are disappointed with Prime Minister Erdogan for criticizing EU ambassadors' statements with regard to ongoing fighting between security forces and PKK militants in southeastern Turkey, and for lashing out at the German Chancellor over Berlin's approval of a resolution on massacres of Armenians by Ottomans during World War I, Monday's "Cumhuriyet" reports. 'Turkish officials seem to think they can go to the press and deny things that were said, and that everyone will accept this,' an EU diplomat complained. The paper also says US diplomats have criticized PM Erdogan for remaining silent in the face of criticism by AKP lawmaker Cavit Torun, who compared President Bush to Saddam Hussein. Diplomats also criticized Erdogan for disrupting Western efforts to pressure Damascus for reform. They also believe that the AKP's interest in Turkey's EU membership process had started to decline, "Cumhuriyet" argues.

Protest Demonstration at Incirlik Airbase: A large group of protestors rallied in Incirlik village near the southern city of Adana on Saturday to demand the closure of the Incirlik Airbase, Sunday papers report. A spokesman for the group said that expanding US access to Incirlik Airbase meant that Turkey is joining the 'invasion' of Iraq, and he called for the closure of all 'foreign bases' in Turkey. Political parties, NGOs, and labor unions joined the demonstration.

Survey: Two-Thirds of AKP Supporters Oppose the US: A survey of AKP members and supporters showed that 72 percent of the party's Istanbul rank-and-file have a negative view of the United States, and 83 percent express negative views of Israel, "Milliyet" reports on Monday. 28 percent of those interviewed are graduates of theology high schools (imam-hatip), 46.3 percent are positive about the European Union, while 35.1 percent oppose Turkey's membership in the European bloc. 68 percent of AKP supporters reportedly hold negative views about Greece, and 81.9 percent have a negative view of Armenia. 49 percent voiced positive opinions of the Turkish military in Turkey, according to the survey, which was carried out by a team organized by the AKP mayor of Eminonu, Istanbul.

Terrorists Killed in Security Operations: Security forces killed 17 leftist terrorists in operations in Turkey's eastern provinces of Erzincan and Tunceli, papers reported over the weekend. Security forces seized weapons and four kg of C-4 explosives. On Friday, two PKK militants were killed in eastern Van province near the Iranian border in a separate operation by the Turkish army. Meanwhile, four PKK members were captured with 3.9 kg of C-4 explosives in a security operation in Istanbul over the weekend.

EDITORIAL OPINION: The European Union

"The Future of the EU"

Kamuran Ozbir wrote in the nationalist "Ortadogu" (6/20): "The rejection of the European Constitution by France and the Netherlands not only brings question marks about the future of the EU, but also about Turkey's possible EU membership. It is interesting that shortly after Turkey changed its penal code as part of the democratization process, the two founding members of the EU rejected the European Constitution and established a link between Turkey's EU membership and the referenda results. . The general atmosphere in Brussels is not giving any indication about a new formula for Turkey, and the official rhetoric insists that the previous decisions taken by the EU will apply. On the other hand, Germany, the largest country in the EU, is likely to go through a change of government. This would bring about a serious crisis in Turkey's EU membership process. Such a development would be more critical for Turkey than Europe's constitutional crisis."

"The Transatlantic View Of the EU Crisis"

Yasemin Congar wrote from Washington in the mainstream "Milliyet" (6/20): "Washington is determined to support Turkey's EU membership. Despite what some in Turkey are saying, Turkey's EU membership goal should not be considered as an alternate to Turkish-American ties. It is obvious that advocates of anti-Americanism and anti-Europeanism in Turkey have common goals, and they continuously feed off each other's arguments. Therefore, Washington's advice to Ankara was that the EU will overcome its current crisis one way or another, so Turkey should move forward in the reform process so as not to give more ammunition to its opponents in Europe. . Washington wants to see Turkey as a strong and influential partner within the EU, as well as a strong regional player and reliable partner in its relations with the US. . In fact, recently developments suggest that Ankara should pursue a 'transatlantic vision' in pursuing its relations with Washington and EU capitals."

"Biggest Concern of the US"

Omer Taspinar commented from Washington in the liberal-intellectual "Radikal" (6/20): The US' biggest fear is that Turkey's EU membership dream could come to an end. If Turkey changes deviates from its EU goal, the Americans believe this will threaten democracy in Turkey. Prime Minister Erdogan's recent meeting with President Bush in Washington demonstrated once again that there is no serious crisis between the two countries. It looks as if the difficult period in the relationship has been at least partly overcome in light of Erdogan's positive messages. . In the period ahead, the Kurdish issue will be a subject ripe for exploitation by the common interests of the anti-American/anti-EU fronts in Turkey. If Turkey pursues its policy on northern Iraq based on paranoia about the Kurdish issue, it will work against US interests and make a more significant improvement in US-Turkish relations less likely."

EDELMAN